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ABSTRACT

This publication provides a periodic report on the changes begun in the New York City public schools under the direction of the City College Advisory Service to Open Corridors. The Open Corridor concept involves a cluster of classrooms around a single corridor which is used as an activity center. Children from the various classrooms may go to the corridor for specialized activities, or they may move from their own classroom to one of the others on the corridor. This issue is one of a series on the first 10 years of continuous Open Corridor work. Included are excerpts from a series of Experienced (Open Corridor) Teachers' Meetings and an article describing the first Open Corridor. (Author/DOW)

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Notes from Workshop Center for Open Education

Fall 1977

Every human being is unique,
unprecedented,
unrepeatable.

René Dubos

THIS ISSUE: TEN YEARS OF OPEN CORRIDORS, 1967/68-1977/78/ THE FIRST OPEN CORRIDOR/ EXPERIENCED TEACHERS EMERGE/ THE SUPREME COURT AND THE TADDLE/ A DEGREE OF OPENNESS/ CHILDREN AT WORK/ WHY I WANT TO BE A TEACHER/ BOOK REVIEW

a publication of the
CITY COLLEGE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
WORKSHOP CENTER FOR OPEN EDUCATION

About this publication

Notes from Workshop Center for Open Education is published four times during the school year. Its purpose is to provide a periodic report on the changes that were begun under the direction of the City College Advisory Service to Open Corridors, and that school people, many of whom use the Workshop Center, are making in New York City public schools. The work of the Advisory is currently funded by the National Institute of Education and a number of Community School Boards.

Our account of these changes is necessarily also an account of the obstacles to change, of those that have yielded to new uses and of those that still confront us. Our focus remains on the ways schools can support the continuous, active, and individual learning of children.

Notes will serve as a forum for discussion of ideas and developments in curriculum and classroom organization that Workshop Center staff and participants find useful to share with teachers and administrators in open classrooms.

THE CITY COLLEGE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP CENTER FOR OPEN EDUCATION serves City College classes, and is a free facility for all teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and parents who are interested and involved in open education in the New York City area. Its work is supported by funds from the National Institute of Education, the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, and City College.

Notes is edited by Ruth Dropkin. Subscription rate: $5.00 a year ($6.00 overseas). Single copies: $1.50. Back issues: $0.75 each. Manuscripts, inquiries, and payments should be sent to the Editor, Workshop Center, 6 Shepard Hall, City College, Convent Avenue and 140th Street, New York, NY 10031. A Cumulative Index to Vols. 1 (1972), 2 (1973), 3 (1974) and 4 (1975) appears in the Winter 1975 issue, and the Index to Vol. 5 in Winter 1976.

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Letter from the director

It is ten years since we proposed to a group of five teachers responsible for an assortment of grades in a Harlem public school that together we try to better their teaching situation. They were unhappy with the isolation of their life in the school, and they all realized that this isolation affected the children adversely, creating as it did a discontinuity of the context within which children learn.

With the aim of breaking through their isolation, we first suggested that these like-minded teachers, after securing the consent of their principal, be relocated in classrooms near each other's; in this way they could more easily share their concerns. With the idea of fostering continuity in a child's learning, we urged upon them attention to what the child had done at an earlier level and to the child's present focus. When we raised the question: Was support for the path of an individual child's development possible within whole-class teaching?, the teachers voiced their feelings about being locked into patterns that impeded their response to individual children. On one thing these five teachers were agreed: they wished to begin new professional relationships and, if placed near each other on the corridor, they would try to start building a community with more openness to each other.

Now, ten years later, corridor groupings of teachers exist in many schools throughout New York City and the country as well. The Open Corridor has been described in many publications, but the dynamic of its development as a new social structure, challenging that of single, unrelated classrooms in a massive and anonymous school, has still to be shared. During this anniversary year, *Notes* will feature a series on our ten years of continuous Open Corridor work. We will offer reprints of articles describing our early work. In addition, because the sharpest and most refined statements of our development were often embodied in them, we will

be publishing excerpts from proposals for funding and from reports to funding agencies. We will, of course, continue to provide examples of current work in the schools. This tenth year, then, will be the time for a detailed overview, for assessment and for projections for the next period of growth in our efforts to redefine the social setting of our schools in terms that more clearly support teachers and children.

Lillian Weber

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I. The first Open Corridor

HUMANIZING THE COLDNESS OF PUBLIC PLACES

by Arthur Tobier

At 9:30 AM teacher aides and student teachers begin to line the small, L-shaped section of the corridor with tables and chairs. Out of a storage room they bring out boxes full of materials and spread the contents on the tables. There are scales, Cuisenaire rods, water vessels, musical instruments, a dozen different kinds of math puzzles, counting devices, hexagons, trapezoids, animals, clay, all manner of measuring devices. Singly, and in pairs, threes, and fours, children filter into the corridor from five classrooms, the doors of which are open and inside of which teachers are conducting lessons. Outside, the corridor has become another kind of place. Some children move directly to activities, having learned the corridor's offerings. Others, sometimes with a friend in tow, shop around before settling down to one thing. And others, perhaps first or second graders, after staying awhile, move through the corridor into one of the classrooms, perhaps a kindergarten or prekindergarten, to listen to a story or play the piano, or to play with animals or with the workbench. At one table a four year old girl is manipulating a game about people, identifying relationships. Behind, a six year old has spread herself on a piece of newsprint on the floor while a student teacher traces her form in crayon, which she will then measure in blocks and hang on the wall. Other children are pacing off

distances, measuring with string. At another table a five year old boy, who until the previous week had been disruptive, doing nothing in the corridor but running back and forth, has just put together, with an effort of intense concentration, a puzzle consisting of triangular and rectangular shapes. Encouraged to show his teacher what he's done ("Show her, Paul, she doesn't know you can do this"), he brings her into the corridor. Lillian Weber, who set up the corridor, comes by and suggests that the boy record his feat. A second grader is called over to write what he describes. Another second grader who has just entered the corridor stops Mrs. Weber and announces she is about to write a story about the educator. Mrs. Weber stands absolutely still as the girl counts the 114 stripes on her dress. In a minute, both stories are completed, passed around, read and re-read, and posted on a bulletin board already 12 deep in stories and records of activity. A few feet away a group of four has been working steadily for an hour weighing shoes and discussing relationships with the corridor teacher, a young graduate student hired for the job. Two kindergarten boys come by, full of themselves and of being on their own, puffing hard from running. A visitor holds one boy, tells him how fast his heart is beating, and gets him to listen to his friend's heart beat. Now the movement in the corridor is fluid. There is a lot of doing and a lot of telling. Questions are investigated in many ways. Nothing that is said or done is left unexamined. Children return to their classes, others come out, work continues in all the rooms. A child pauses at the entrance of one room before going in to show her teacher a paper flower she has just made. Inside the room, run along formal lines, there is a striking absence of restlessness. Children are hard at work despite the sounds and movement from the corridor. In sharp contrast, a second grade class next door operates informally in small clusters of children. A teacher comes to the doorway of her room, watches the activity in the corridor for a time, and returns to her work. By 11 AM the corridor begins to clear. Materials, tables, and chairs have been returned to their storeroom. Left on the corridor walls are the paper cutouts of children's figures. It is only then, when the corridor is empty, that a visitor notices how dark it is inside the school.

* * *

BACKGROUND, RATIONALE, ASSESSMENT

(In 1967) Lillian Weber, then assistant professor of early childhood education at City College, came back to this country from an 18-month work and study trip in England, firm in her conviction that public schools in New York City had a long way to go to be supportive of the way children learn. At the time, public discussion here about early childhood education centered on Head Start. Did it or didn't it work to eliminate the difficulties that children, euphemistically called "educationally disadvantaged," had with formal schooling? Most of the experts felt Head Start's approach to schooling -- sometimes tutorial; sometimes bits and pieces inherited from the nursery school tradition -- closed some kind of gap, or at least ameliorated a difference in motivation, between the middle class children who traditionally made it in school and the welfare class children who didn't. But the statistical gains disappeared, it was found, when the children entered into the conventional process of public school life.

Reflecting on the regression, the educationists decided the problem derived from a basic lack of continuity between Head Start and public school experience. Teaching styles differed, they argued, expectations differed, the degree of intellectual enrichment differed. A program of "follow through" was proposed to extend Head Start's notions of compensatory education to a second year of schooling, a bridge in other words.

Mrs. Weber saw the roots of the problem elsewhere. In England, she had steeped herself in infant school techniques and traditions. Working eight hour days, five days a week for the better part of her stay there, she made intensive observations in 56 schools, mostly in London, Birmingham, and Bristol, and mostly in working class areas; she talked to hundreds of government officials, headmistresses, teachers, parents; she made voluminous notes;[1] and she made a movie about the infant school.[2]

[1] Ed. Note: Out of these came a book, *The English Infant School and Informal Education* (Prentice-Hall, 1971).

[2] *The Infant School* (Education Development Center, 1966)

The English infant school experience -- fashioned over a 50-year period, not overnight, as some publicists for change would have it -- provided for the kind of continuity the Americans sought, Mrs. Weber felt. By this, she meant

> a rich environment, allowing for self-directed activities, the integrating of all kinds of experiencing with skill learning, an allowing of movement to the environment, a use of overflow (corridor or hall) areas in an in-and-out way, and open door classrooms.

In some English schools, she said, this approach became

> an integrated day, where reading and other skills are going on with some small group at all times of day. The teacher moves to individuals or forms small groups. Mixed age grouping allows for beginning learning at all points, allows for back and forthness of a child's learning, allows for continuation in the older child's experience of the rich concreteness we accept for the younger. The teacher's isolation is gone with the open door classroom. The teacher is freed, in this structure, of the constant need to control and tell. The child is freed to reinforce his learning from the richness of the environment.

Believing in the integral relationship of structure to its roots, Mrs. Weber did not expect to translate English structure to the American scene. But even the use of the ideas in the context of our own setting, she felt, would meet stumbling blocks -- a chief one being the typical public school building. The design of the city's school buildings, no less than its public housing, has never paid but the most minimal attention to the way people in those buildings live their lives. The schools have tended to be collections of isolated rooms in outsized buildings that eschew intimacy, and

that lend themselves to nothing so well as to the isolated experience, the grade-oriented, prescribed curriculum, and the block class structure, conventions which a substantial body of research and practice argues are anathema to the way children go about learning.

In such a setting, Mrs. Weber said, overflow space is difficult to arrange; corridors are restricted to passing through by virtue of the fire law; and without overflow space, movement to multiple activities, the provision of a really rich environment, the concentration needed for small group teaching in the midst of multiple activities, are all difficult to arrange. Control, in such a setting, becomes the school's primary concern. How could one make schools give up some of their excess control to implement children's ways of learning?

P.S. 123

Mrs. Weber started to shape an answer to that question in the spring of 1967. City College had assigned her as consultant to P.S. 123 (District 6), one of four schools in Harlem affiliated with the College's teacher education department, and where she had helped formulate the prekindergarten program before going to England. Once again, there was this mammoth school; teachers working in isolation, teachers with distrust for one another because of the burden of children who didn't learn but who were passed along from the previous year; and children, their goodwill being exhausted by the failure toward which they ineluctably moved. And there were the system's future teachers, unprepared for the reality of a school classroom. How honest was it, Mrs. Weber asked herself after awhile, to evaluate student teachers on what they could not do when the objective circumstances of the school made it impossible for them to do otherwise?

Gradually, with the learning atmosphere of the infant school as reference point, the idea took root, Mrs. Weber said, that by cutting off a small section of the school it might be feasible to operate it as a unit with a mixed grouping of classes, and use the corridor as the connecting link and overflow space. She floated the idea to her faculty heads and the district office,

won their support, and on the strength of this got the principal of P.S. 123 to let her test her notions. For his part, the principal arranged to have a prekindergarten, two kindergartens, a first grade and a second grade in the five rooms that opened off a first floor corridor. The teachers consented to a minimal participation in the project. At the same time, Mrs. Weber submitted a proposal to Washington outlining her model and requesting financial support. In the fall, she began to sit in on classes to observe.

The teachers met her with reserve. She was, after all, an outsider whose purposes they still didn't know. Neither were they unhappy with the way they worked. Aware of this, Mrs. Weber bided her time, never discussed theory, never tried to alter their teaching style. She focused on designing a structure for the corridor, and imperceptibly, she engaged them in the process of planning, emphasizing detail. The corridor was to serve as a model adjacent to the classroom which they could observe and get to like and draw from or not as they chose. Since Mrs. Weber was committed to not directly altering their teaching style, the significance of the corridor, as she saw it, was that it allowed the teachers constant access to a model without forcing it on them. She was sure they would see the children learning in different ways and at least become interested.

She had them figure out the kinds of materials they'd want, and how they'd rearrange their schedules to have time to use the materials. She had them think about a special kind of material they might want that would reflect something they each particularly wanted to do in class and were willing to share with the other teachers. (A teacher chose animals, another a phonograph, dancing, a third picked a workbench, and one chose an oven, all of which Mrs. Weber purchased for them out of a $1000 grant she had obtained from a small foundation.) Most difficult, because of the varying scheduling of teacher prep periods, she asked them to arrange a common free time to use all of the enrichments. In each case, however, the teachers found workable solutions.

THE CORRIDOR OPENS

The corridor would operate along informal lines, no matter how the teachers organized classes in their rooms. Each teacher would release as many as five children at a time to visit the corridor or any of the other four rooms and in turn take in as many as three from outside. The planning sessions, delayed by the teacher strike, lasted through the fall semester. On March 6 the open corridor came into being, one hour three days a week.

The teachers met regularly with Mrs. Weber. They made adjustments, and exchanged insights, particularly about movement, since that was the essential innovation as far as they were concerned. "Perhaps the older children have annoyed us," Mrs. Weber suggested at one meeting, "but almost all of them have not really annoyed us except in the fact of their passing through. They have been interested in seeing what is going on. And I think the system of saying, 'Well, would you like to look for a minute,' has become a good one."

"They are really there," said a teacher, "because they're a little lost and because they have seen something that interests them. For a short time, involving them and including them gives them reason to have some sort of contact with you, and it ends up being a much more positive thing than hurrying them up and running them off with an angry growl in your voice."

At first the teachers decided where the children were to go and how long they stayed, but as the children learned more about what was available, free choice prevailed -- even to the point where the teachers became less concerned with "giving" children "full experiences," letting them take their time to explore instead.

By the end of the term, the open corridor had clearly made an impact. Movement between classes had begun to continue even after the corridor period had ended, and had begun to extend beyond the children in the five classes on the corridor. Student teachers had learned to "make do" and adapt to things quickly and without fuss and bother. In the corridor children had become active and creative and in the classroom both the need for control and discipline had diminished sharply. The style of the corridor -- informality and exchange -- had even started to

filter into the classrooms of a few teachers.

But the filtering process for other teachers worked very slowly. Mrs. Weber, in a term-end review, judged that the project hadn't developed a deep enough relationship with teachers. The necessary involvement of the teachers in the problems of further development of the project didn't happen, and so they had only limited identification with the project. The developmental process, particularly at the beginning, needed more time.

Similarly, she felt the project had failed to develop enough real understanding of its goals among parents and in getting parents to help with small adjustments. But just as teachers -- despite Mrs. Weber's concern -- elected to continue the project, parent *support* was obtained.

> I think the parents' and the schools' identification with the project grew during the term as the parents saw this total commitment to coping and small adjustments. But it grew even more markedly in the last month. Projects usually end with the end of the college term. The commitment to the project seemed proved to the parents by the continuance of project personnel to the very last day of the term. Small things like the project party for one of the departing teachers, including many of the school administrators, helped break through the isolation typical of many college projects. Certainly, during the last packing-away week, it was clear that the parents had warm feelings toward us. As they came to say goodbye and as we sought them out to say goodbye, we spoke together as part of a common enterprise that would start again next year--with or without funding.

One other event of note occurred during the spring term. Parents and teachers from P.S. 84

in the Joan of Arc complex (District 5) came up to Harlem to observe the Open Corridor in P.S. 123 and, impressed, successfully lobbied their district office to invite in Mrs. Weber. The invitation, and the financial support, came from the district's eight-school Balanced Class Project, under Jack Isaacs's direction.

REORGANIZED CLASSROOMS

At the start of the 1968-69 school year (without funding: the Open Corridor is a unitary plan and the USOE asserted it was funding only those projects "doing" a grade at a time), the Open Corridor expanded to nine classrooms: the original five at P.S. 123 (in a low income, racially separate area) and four more (two kindergartens and two first grades) at P.S. 84 (in a low-to-high income, racially integrated area), with the extra dimensions in the latter of having teachers eager to reorganize, not only the corridor, but their classrooms.

In fact, as it turned out, the project had to curtail corridor activity in late fall when the school's custodian cited the fire laws, and all of its immediate efforts had to be refocused on classroom structure.

> We decided to start with the reshaping of the first grade while we were waiting for materials to appear because of course the major discontinuity is from kindergarten to first grade. Kindergarten has much greater access to materials for the children and is used to simultaneous multiple activities, at least in some measure. The first grade teachers were extremely willing to do this extension of environment and were very easy about breaking through the previous stereotype of the first grade. They began to develop their first grade by including all aspects of environment that could be thought of -- a very brave attempt but a somewhat frenetic one. All aspects of the kinder-

garten were included in all aspects of first grade: a small block area, a small mathematics area, a small housekeeping area, a small art area, a small science area.

Now this took some evaluation of the worth of small, diluted experiences. Of course the teachers were still thinking of self-contained classrooms that had to include the whole world rather than trying to get really rich experiences and borrowing from each other, with the area of our project considered as one interrelated whole. Take the question of blocks in the first grade. If there are to be blocks for six year old children, there should be a massive amount of blocks so the children can recreate with blocks their environment in a fashion that they can put themselves into as a six year old child does or even a late five year old child does. It is one of the things that has been developed in certain of the independent schools and the children do elementary geography and all sorts of projects that are certainly cognitive through the medium of blocks. A small block area will not do this and therefore we began to think about what was it that we did want in the first grade that was not perhaps in the kindergarten and that would give the children a good bit of satisfaction from the sense of building. Many of the concrete mathematical materials which can be used exploratively for building, can be handled in this kind of way.

We decided to opt for extremely rich areas rather than thin areas. With this in mind and conceiving that, for the child of six, the exploration of concrete math is something that he should have in very great measure, we decided against the math table in the middle of the room, a small corner where everything tended to fall off, and for a large area where many aspects of the same thing can be explored one after another and compared. We decided to take the entire back of the room for mathematics using the entire back shelf unit there to put out materials for free access by the child. A large table seating eight formed a T to this shelf. The permanent book area that is in this corner is unfortunately permanent and therefore cannot be moved to what became the language area but was incorporated as the information center because this then connects the mathematics area with the windowed science area. The science area had initially been put near the door as something to attract children but was placed under the windows adjacent to the mathematics area, since so much of what is done needs light and is connected with growth and is also connected with mathematics.

Manipulative games are certainly part of the mathematics but for the purpose of the first grade are part of this corner at a separate table, at a closing off of the area from the science area, at least at present. One first grade arranged a smaller science area and a quite large manipulative game area. The other arranged a smaller manipulative game area as a closing off of the half of the room that had become mathematics.

Now the second large concentration for a first grade child, a six year old child, is his induction into language skills. We hope his skills will develop with use of this extended environment and as needed for his experiencing. Language, telling, writing and reading will be part of *all* the experiences. Some of his specific language learning is also being set up under conditions of free access and of his doing a good bit of the learning under his own steam and with his own questions. The entire front of the room has become a language area. The second half of the set of windows have become the intimate reading book corner that can also be the source and the beginning of dramatization. A large area that can seat approximately eight and is adjacent to the blackboard is the area where writing, language, games, phonics, can and do go on. At the door, there is a small table and chairs. On the table there is a typewriter and a sign above the typewriter says "sign to use--type only one page." The typewriter is in constant use and not misuse. Right next to that, adjacent to the blackboard still, there is a small table with a couple of chairs for very special language work where a tape-recorder can be used as well and this is called the "listening corner." We are now at the door and on the side of the door near the cubbies there is a large art table and right next to the sink is the easel.

Thus, the first grade has become defined as mathematics, science, language, dramatiza-

tion, and art. The desks and chairs for all children, relating to a teacher, no longer exist. The children relate to areas of the room and the teacher is concerned with small groups and goes to see children at various times. This breakthrough of a different shape of the first grade happened with about ten trial ventures, two very willing, interested teachers, who thought up variations of this, who have created sign-up sheets in the various areas, and who are already coping with the actual problems of use. The children have fallen into the pattern of use already and as it is used bring up new questions as to how it can be used further. It is in this sense that this is a real development.

FIRST-YEAR RESULTS

Over its first school year, Mrs. Weber has refined the open corridor at P.S. 123, expanded into a daily morning period, roughly from 9:30 to 11, and made it by all accounts into a powerful medium of learning. Movement has become more fluid for the children; it has become almost second nature for them to bring their classroom teachers into the corridor to look at and comment on their work. Children who lacked the confidence to recognize and develop respect for their own achievements now acknowledge them freely, according to teachers. When a child discovers how to solve a math puzzle he automatically looks for someone to explain and read what he's done. The same holds for drawing, writing, weighing, measuring, and other activities. Most of the children observed in the corridor do not appear anxious about getting approval. On the contrary, most of them display self-acceptance as learners. "From a child's standpoint," a clinical psychologist, who observed the corridor period recently, said, "the Weber model (a term Mrs. Weber abjures) gives a child the chance to explain and record what he's doing and lets him be responsible for feedback to the teacher. He not only decides what to do, he lets everyone know what he's doing. In a traditional classroom you're not

held accountable for the activities you're engaged in."

Besides the project's growing impact on children it has become, in effect, a continuous teaching model, affecting not only the student teachers (City College early childhood students in Mrs. Weber's seminar as well as other seminars are expected to show their ability to set up multiple activity situations in classes), but the teachers in the classrooms -- some in the extreme. One second grade teacher, thoroughly traditional at the start of the project, has reorganized her class on informal lines. The relationship of all the teachers to the project has deepened, particularly in the way teachers have opened themselves to learning about their children's capabilities from their experiences in the corridor.

Downtown, at P.S. 84, after nearly nine months of planning, adjustments, and adapting to the loss of the corridor, the principle of moving to the environment, of access and overflow, is still intact. In fact, but unofficially, the movement extends to one fifth grade and one sixth grade class whose two teachers restructured their classes along informal school lines even prior to Mrs. Weber's coming to the school. (In their classes, the prescribed curriculum is covered, but with a richer variety of materials than normally obtains in traditional classes, and there is much more trust in the free choices of children and their ability to become deeply involved in their work, as well as trust in children to help each other.) Their example, as well as Mrs. Weber's model, has generated interest in the teaching style among other teachers.

Not all of the four project classes can claim the same accomplishment, but the best is exemplary, Mrs. Weber feels. On a recent visit to a first grade class an observer made note of the following: Children worked in about four separate small groups, while others worked by themselves. There was a math lesson going on directed by the teacher. A visiting parent was reading to three girls. An aide sat among a gathering of five children showing them how to knit. A fifth grader who had dropped by for a visit was showing two of the first graders how to clean a rabbit cage. Children were building boats, shaping clay, painting. A reader came up to the teacher to ask a question,

listened for a moment at the math table and decided to stay and participate. When the teacher excused herself to talk to a visitor, one of the children took over the task of leading the group in a game involving mathematical relationships. A high level of enthusiasm continued throughout the day. Children, on their own, left their groups and helped themselves to various pre-reading games set up in large envelopes along the blackboard ledge. These included games that required putting together parts of sentences or words to make complete sentences or words, as well as lotto games. Other children worked from similar set ups on opposite walls for number and measurement activities, science, and perceptual discrimination practice. Most of the material had been designed and constructed by the teacher. None of the children or the adults working in the room seemed in the least bit put out by the level of noise. Voices adjusted to the immediate group. The teacher was in continual movement, stopping sometimes five minutes, sometimes 15 minutes, to work with a group or a child. In the course of a week, she explained, she would check on the progress of all the children at least once to insure the ground she wanted covered was indeed being covered.

RECORDKEEPING

Where the internal reorganization has occurred, as at P.S. 84, and children are doing so many different things, the need to develop new ways of recording to match the new life of the classroom is very great. It is one of the things on which Mrs. Weber has spent a lot of time with teachers.

> Obviously, the teacher needs to know what it is that the child has done. These very enterprising teachers of the first grade have already gone ahead in many ways. They have set up checklists in areas, name sign-up sheets when you are in an area. There's still much to work out. Thinking in terms of the need for the child's management of this, of the teacher knowing where he is,

one idea is the use of masonite disks with names on them that a child could hang up to record attendance and that he would take with him if he leaves for the corridor.

In the basic areas of number and of language, the teacher has to think through which experiences does she want to know whether the child has had, whether the child has lived through and accomplished. Suggestions on recording came from patterns taken from the Nuffield junior mathematics books, of certain major areas of progress and certain needed areas of progress with a page per month on each child. The Nuffield material also supplied a large chart illustrating the interrelationship of both language and mathematical concepts in all the aspects of the program, in the uses of sand, of clay, of water, of art materials, of housekeeping corner, of block building and in the more obvious handling of the concrete mathematical materials and in the more obvious language area.

Unless the teacher is clear about this interrelationship of all aspects of experience, she will not be stressing and picking up and focusing and responding to the emergence of the linguistic and the numerical conception in all aspects of the child's experience. The general aims for the child can be expressed as having the experiences and developing the skills that he feels are worth knowing and that he discovers that he can know with the aid of an environment that's worth knowing and that he discovers is connected. In the most generalized way, long range

> aims for number, for language, for science, have been worked out and will be used as a chart in front of the teacher at all times.

This longer range planning and new life in the classroom does not fit well with the old administrative requirement of weekly lesson plans still demanded of teachers, so Mrs. Weber has helped teachers meet it but on these new terms.

> The weekly plan should be a very simple one that does not overburden the teacher or prevent her from relating to her long-range aims. Stories, songs, and dramatization are considered as reinforcement for large areas of number, language, natural and social science, art and music. In the weekly plan, there would be a focus that the teacher would relate to along with all the other things in the extended environment that had already been made available to the child and to which he can return for repeated experiences. She would focus with small groups on this, exploring possibilities in a multi-level way, and at the end of the week would say what had been done, what hadn't been done, and therefore plan her next week in this way. Two rexographed sheets would be given to the teacher each week; one to hand in to the office to fulfill administrative requirements, the other to have in her room to relate to her long-range aims which, after all, are the meat of all the incidental learning that goes on in addition to any focus that she may have.
>
> Any idea that there would not be planning is obviously a fallacious idea and a simplistic notion of what such a program is about. On the contrary, only the deepest thinking about the possibilities

of an experience will make the teacher available to help.

It is this thoroughness, this deep thinking through, finally, observers say, that distinguishes the Open Corridor/open classroom project.

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II. Experienced teachers emerge

By 1973, a sizable number of teachers had volunteered for, entered, and worked in some 15 Open Corridors in various Manhattan schools. They had, in effect, become Experienced Teachers, *a new grouping with its own characteristics, needs, and concerns. In answer to requests from them for opportunities to exchange problems and solutions, the Workshop Center for Open Education set up a series of Experienced Teachers' Meetings beginning in the 1975-76 school year and continuing through the present year on a regular monthly basis. Both the indented sections below, which are excerpts from tapings of these Experienced Teachers' meetings, and the remaining paragraphs of explanation were part of a report to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Experienced Teachers whose words appear here: Jane Soyer, Frances Motola, and Sherrin Hirsch.*

> Now I have much more of a sense of the year as a whole block of time. I know that what happens in September and October is not necessarily what's going to happen in November and December. If things are messy in October or September, it doesn't mean that they're going to be messy later on in the year. I know there

is a kind of time needed for things to jell, which means that some things are more disorganized at the beginning of the year. So I'm not as worried and scared as I was when I first joined the Open Corridor. At that time I thought "This is it!" and "Where am I going?" I wanted to know "Is it always going to be this way?" But after being in it a few years, you do see the time it takes for children to really get a feel of what they should do when they finish something, and where they should go, and how they should get involved with someone else, and whether they can help somebody, or do something by themselves. It does take time to set up a room so that it will be responsive to what is happening with the individuals coming into that room.

* * *

In 1973-74 we made our first formal step in shifting from sole reliance on the external Advisory. We included some Experienced Teachers in Advisory training with the aim of building the capacity for school self-support of Open Corridor development. As a result of a generous grant from the Chancellor's Fund four teachers from District 3 schools could be released for training with the Advisory. These Experienced Teachers became advisors-in-training in 1973. Subsequently in 1974-75 they assumed some advisory responsibilities within their schools while also retaining partial teaching responsibilities. Each of the new Experienced Teacher advisors was released a half day a week to help other teachers in her school.

I work closely with a third-grade teacher. Her kids and mine have done a lot of sharing. Hers come in and listen to my kids read; they play games with us; right now we are doing a play together.

This year, the third-grade teacher had a child who never spoke in school. He would read to her if they went into a very private corner, but he never spoke otherwise. You couldn't even surprise him into talking, he had so trained and disciplined himself. Finally, about a month ago, he attacked another boy--just leaped on him and began to choke him--and he was suspended. When this happened I felt badly that I hadn't used the reading and thinking I'd been doing about observation to help this child. I felt I had missed an opportunity, that maybe this child wouldn't have gotten to the point of being so angry if we had moved earlier. So when I mentioned to the third-grade teacher the possibility of taking notes on children next year she loved the idea, and so did another teacher. Next year we are prepared to begin doing some observation.

* * *

There was only one teacher in my corridor who was new last year. She was an experienced teacher; she'd taught nine or ten years in another school. But she sees a lot of differences in this setting, which is new to her, and feels it is important to know how to work best in it. So she continually comes by or phones me and asks for suggestions, for ideas about curriculum, or explanations of why I do things the way I do them in this school. And I know she also goes to other teachers.

Almost every Open Corridor school has released other teachers for some Advisory training and in almost every school teachers who can be a center for others have emerged. A teacher in

one school has formulated plans for setting up a resource center in the school; two teachers at another school have developed a close working relationship and collaborated in documentation of their curriculum with their advisor; at still another site, one teacher collaborated with her advisor on a documentation of the language surround of kindergarten, first and second-graders. In general, the participation of Experienced Teachers with advisors in documentation activities has strongly supported their professional development. The first group of Experienced Teachers participated in The Prospect School's Summer Institute in 1974. Several Experienced Teachers joined the Reading Research Strand at The Prospect School Summer Institute, sponsored by the Educational Testing Service, at which plans for a collaborative study of reading were formulated.

* * *

> I was out of the classroom, working as an advisor, for four years. I had many reservations and a lot of anxiety about going back. One of the big problems I had on coming back was that I expected myself to be a super-teacher. In working with really outstanding teachers in the Open Corridor program, I had learned so much about classroom organization, particularly various ways of relating to children. I was going to have the perfect room, and be the soul of serenity and I would never do terrible things to children. And, you know, it was very, very difficult. Half the children hadn't been in Open Corridor before; their parents weren't expecting them to be in it and they didn't know me. I felt like a stranger.
>
> I didn't come back with any special role. I came back as a teacher. So I don't chair meetings, or anything like that. But without my being a leader, the other teachers still look to me for the experiences I've had. They'll ask: "Well, how are they doing that...?" and "Did you ever see anybody do it

this way?" or "How did they organize it in that school?"

There are a number of new teachers in the school who are not Open Corridor teachers and I've been able to establish a relationship with them, in very small but prosperous ways. Now there are six of us who work together and I think we have some pretty nice things going on. They come around and ask questions of me: "Do you have any books on...?" "Would you mind if I came in and looked?" I feel that I'm getting a lot out of this kind of exchange.

When I left the school four years ago I was very judgmental about other teachers-- they were either good or bad, open or closed, etc.-- the lines were very rigid. Now I have a much better concept of time, of how long even little things take to develop. I feel much more able now to work with other people who maybe don't think exactly the way I do about working with children but nevertheless have many fine qualities.

When you're out of the classroom, you have an opportunity to try different things without the pressure attendant on you as a classroom teacher. You're also constantly reliving your own teaching, standing back and thinking about its pertinence, as you look at other teachers. Sometimes that's rather painful. But the successes that you internalize along the way give you courage and strengths when you do return to the classroom.

I think part of my happiness in this situation--which I still can't believe--is that I feel more secure about what I'm doing. Also, I feel there really are other people out there, even if

they're not in my school, people I can look to for support if I need it. One develops a sense of--if I want to do something, well, I'll find the resources, find the way. That's the difference. Five years ago I didn't have that feeling.

* * *

Since September 1974, the National Institute of Education has funded two advisors to develop ways in which Experienced Teachers can become supportive of less experienced teachers. (Their reports appear in *The Open Education Advisor*, a Workshop Center for Open Education bulletin of September 1975.)

Experienced Teachers reveal qualities of generosity to other staff members and of sensitivity to children and to parent needs. The focus is no longer on the classroom as a field for the expression of the individual creativity of the teacher and on the classroom considered as an isolated unit. Classroom problems certainly still exist, but these teachers, experienced in open education, have the energy to go beyond the classroom, to relate to each other, to principals, parents, other teachers. They take greater responsibility for decision-making.

In 1976-77 the Experienced Teachers expressed their feeling that their need was to *not* concentrate on crisis all the time, though of course they would need to return to pressing issues again and again. What they wanted from us was an involvement that would help them confirm to themselves their professionalism, an involvement in the broad issues of their commitment. Facing pressures for separate organization of learning disabilities classes, they felt the issue was inclusion--a frank discussion of what it implied and what its difficulties were--and, facing the current difficulties, a recommitment to the support of each individual entrusted to their care. Around this issue, the Experienced Teachers decided to engage in serious study of Lois Barclay Murphy's book *Vulnerability, Coping and Growth*, in which children were viewed over their long-term development. It seemed to them that with this book as focus, they could discuss the pervasive character of vulnerability and

commit themselves to search for the pervasiveness of resiliency. Two teachers volunteer to lead the discussion each time, but all members of the group read the material and participate.

The discussion on vulnerability is interspersed with discussion of the meaning of comprehension in reading, led by Edward Chittenden and Ann Bussis. The arrangement is particularly appropriate because many of these Experienced Teachers are engaged in the Educational Testing Service Reading Study conducted by Chittenden, Bussis and Amarel.

The Experienced Teachers have indicated that they wish to continue this extension of their professional commitment through study, and have selected as their focus for the year 1977-78 "the family as educator," interspersed with sessions on the Dewey School.

THE SUPREME COURT

The recent Supreme Court decision upholding the constitutionality of corporal punishment in the schools amounts to a legal mandate for child abuse. It is difficult to imagine a more sweeping setback for child abuse prevention efforts because the decision makes a mockery of the entire prevention campaign.

Hardly a night passes when the television cameras or the newspapers do not focus on some particularly grisly example of child abuse. Researchers point out that well over half the incidents develop out of disciplinary action by parents, and that the best way to prevent child abuse is to use alternatives to physical punishment in the first place. How ironic to impose penalties on parents who beat their children while the public schools get high court sanction to do the same thing. Many states even require teachers to report parents suspected of abuse, thereby making the schools an important link in the child abuse detection scheme. Yet, very few states have statutes that make the schools accountable to the parents by banning corporal punishment and requiring school personnel to use other forms of discipline. According to a Berkeley-based organization called the Committee to End Violence Against the Next Generation, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey and Hawaii are the only states which forbid the practice. Unfortunately, it is naive to assume that teachers are any more immune than parents to the pressures that lead to abuse.

The recent Supreme Court decision, *Ingraham v. Wright*, is also notable for its tortured juxtaposition of criminals and schoolchildren. Unlike the criminal, according to the majority opinion, the "schoolchild has little need for the protection of the Eighth Amendment" against cruel and unusual punishment. If that is so, then schoolchildren have fewer rights than convicted criminals. The Court long ago banned the flogging of prisoners. But a schoolchild, like one of the Miami, Florida plaintiffs in the recent case, can be struck more than 20 times with a paddle "because he was slow to respond to his teacher's instructions." Dis-

AND THE PADDLE

senting from the majority view, Justice Byron R. White wrote, "If there are some punishments so barbaric that they may not be imposed for the commission of crimes..., then *a fortiori*, similar punishments may not be imposed on persons for less culpable acts, such as breaches of school discipline."

Corporal punishment is not only a vestige of barbarism; it doesn't work. Physical punishment teaches children that "might makes right," concluded a 1972 National Education Association Task Force report, "and it may increase disruptive behavior." The American Psychological Association also opposes the use of corporal punishment in the schools, in part on the grounds that it is ineffective....

To those who argue that the rod is the only language some children understand, Bill Pharis, executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, responds, "That is the strongest argument I could make for teaching them a second language. It is those children who have been exposed to no other form of correction who most desperately need alternatives and less degrading treatment." Someone must break the rising cycle of aggression.

To oppose the use of corporal punishment is not to oppose the discipline of disruptive students. If a real crime has been committed, such as an assault on a teacher or on school property, then let the school press charges against the perpetrator. At least then the child would have a chance for a fair hearing, and the punishment would be meted out by a court. If the "crime" is simply being unruly, then corporal punishment is not the way to teach the child to respect authority....

At a time when the United States is desperately trying to reduce the incidence of child abuse, now estimated at one million cases per year, the Supreme Court could do better than to put its seal of approval on the paddle.

--DR. EDWARD ZIGLER, *Young Children*, 9/77

A degree of openness

Wilhelmina R. Wynn

Where there is neither an open school nor an Open Corridor, it is still possible for a degree of openness to germinate. When this happens adults and children reflect a trusting relationship, there is an excitement about what is going on, and even an old established community institution begins to unbend. An example: Increased openness at our school this year grew out of a new approach to the customary practice of using exhibits from the American Museum of Natural History to supplement our regular class trip to the Museum. (Our school in Harlem is about thirty minutes travel from the Museum.)

JUNIOR CURATORS

Each fall, when the Museum's Department of Education announces its circulating exhibits, teachers generally sign for them, receive and then return them to the teacher coordinator, and sometimes even add a brief comment on their usefulness--but very little more. In October, when it was my turn again to serve as coordinator, I chose four boys from my fourth grade class as monitors to do the work of delivering the exhibits: dioramas of natural history, tools of our culture, people in their native environment, animals with prey, the human body, etc. The monitors were well-mannered, dependa-

ble and quiet--in fact, too quiet. This I discovered one day when they returned from delivering a new exhibit and it was clear that they hadn't even read the title. I was troubled: How could they learn to think and talk about the exhibits? I decided then and there that a change in their role was called for: They would no longer be just monitors, they would be transformed into junior curators. The boys were pleased with their new title, at the same time that they were a bit uncertain about its meaning. I explained that as curators they would introduce and tell a little about the exhibits they were in charge of. In order to do this, they would be looking up the meaning of many words, terms and so forth. They would have to ask as well as answer questions.

Now that they realized they would have greater responsibility, they organized, with my help, what they called "IMPORTANT STEPS," as follows:

.KEEPING RECORDS: They would set up a chart as a 10-day appointment calendar sent to teachers most likely to want a particular exhibit for a day. In the beginning, the group did not always read the appointment chart correctly; from time to time they delivered museum cases to teachers who were not expecting them! Daily repetition helped them with this and other records such as the NOTICE OF EXCHANGE postal card file. Several days before the exhibits were to be exchanged, we received a card from the Museum announcing the date. The boys were then responsible for taking the exhibit to the office on the designated morning; they became very aware of how much they needed a card file.

Another recordkeeping job is maintaining a folder with written work from the classes visited and instructed by the junior curators for we had decided that one of the results of the junior curator program would be a newsletter. Terry, their chairman, wrote the teachers requesting their interest and cooperation. (Whenever Terry wrote anything for the committee, they sat with him at the library table, all eagerly contributing.)

The group also keeps a list of the books used. The boys' efforts at compiling a bibliography showed that they understood how to search a book for its identifying information.

.RESEARCH: The junior curators now never forget to study the exhibits when they arrive. They look for reading material in our classroom library and public library. Other teachers share generously their books, audiovisual, and classroom rexograph materials. Our entire class contributes facts gleaned from television programs.

In addition to printed research aids, the children collect live insect specimens and use our classroom collections of rocks, whales' teeth, and shells.

.WORK ROUTINE: Every day the boys deliver the exhibits at about 9:15 to a scheduled class. They read aloud an introductory paragraph or two, allow time for questions, and leave the exhibits for the rest of the day. Sometimes the teacher may ask the boys to return at a later time to speak to her class.

Our own class functions as a rehearsal audience before whom the junior curators try out their demonstration. They have learned to improve their pronunciation and to deploy the group members; for example, some to walk around with rocks to show while others answer questions.

With time the group came to know exactly what to expect of its members in terms of performance; this would change with each new exhibit to be handled. At first, Timothy, the most reticent, was encouraged by the group to say, "Good morning, schoolmates. We are junior curators. We have brought you some rocks to see. We hope you enjoy them." Later, he began to discuss content. All the boys are now willing to do offstage participation, such as showing objects to the children to touch. They have all become skilled at introducing themselves and their projects to the teachers.

Over time, the junior curators have become more able to work together productively. They will return from a demonstration where, for instance, they may have failed to answer a question and someone will say, "We need to study. Some child asked us how the insects got inside the plastic plate, and we didn't know." This was in contrast with their earlier responses: "Perhaps your teacher can help us," or "We haven't learned that yet."

Among other things, these youngsters have observed that children do not all think along prescribed lines. During one session they told a class that salt was a mineral and went on to talk about other minerals and rocks. Later, during the question period, when someone asked where pepper came from, both the classroom teacher and the junior curators were taken aback. Finally, Barry replied, "That's not the topic for today." The next day, in another class, the same question was asked. Then they decided that they'd better find the answer to the "pepper question."

Our curators have also begun to appreciate that order in the classroom allows learning to take place. On two occasions when they came back to our class and I asked, "How did it go? You stayed a little longer than usual," the answer came, "The class wouldn't get quiet. We waited until they did."

THE NEWSLETTER

By February, we had collected a representative number of written pieces from the classes in the school. These we organized according to the exhibits to which they were related, adding some work from the junior curators' files and some letters of congratulation from the principal and teachers. Every staff member and every contributor received a copy. We also sent copies to the Museum and reserved some for the Workshop Center for Open Education.

Once the newsletter had been distributed, the junior curators were invited into classrooms twice as often. Certainly it is a pleasure for the teachers in the lower grades to see what their former pupils are doing in the fourth grade, and the early childhood pupils are very proud to have their fourth grade brothers, cousins or friends come into their room and 'teach' them. Furthermore, everybody is delighted to see his name in the newsletter.

In our class, we use the newsletter in many ways: for writing introductions and explanations of exhibits, for correct spelling of names, to review facts, to practice a correct letter form, and on and on.

MUSEUM MUTUALITY

In recognition of our Museum Newsletter our class was invited back to the Museum, as a special treat. All told, the junior curators have had three trips to the Museum, and have been asked to join other children who help in the work that goes on there. Museum employees showed them designs and models for exhibits which will go into the new Asian wing and into the wing for Reptiles and Amphibians. The scientists-artists demonstrated and instructed the children briefly in the techniques and materials they used: rubber, plastic, epoxy, styrofoam and fiberglass, processed to reproduce life-like snakes, human figures, leaves, fish, dinosaurs, and more. Every staff member who spoke with the children treated the junior curators as though they were on-the-job trainees. The boys helped to construct a model of the newborn coelacanth, thought to be an extinct prehistoric fish but rediscovered in the waters off South Africa in this century. Before they left, the junior curators learned that the exhibits we have been receiving at our school were first built in the 1930s by WPA artists employed at the Museum.

At our class visit we were introduced to circulating exhibits still being designed at the Museum. One of the most striking was Masks for protection, entertainment and ceremonies. A Masks Kit included masks that could be put on by children, with enough surgical masks for an entire class; colorful, standing pictures of masks, and a metallic mirror; a poster; a teacher's guide; and an evaluation sheet to be returned to the Museum.

ASKING QUESTIONS

The capacity for questions is an index to the degree of openness within each of our children, between teachers and children, and between the Museum and our school, especially our fourth grade class. In some of the classes the junior curators visited, teachers noticed that their children seemed freer to ask questions of the junior curators than they did during their regular, more structured lessons. "Why did you kill the butterfly?" "Did you have to kill it?"

One of my concerns had been how my fourth grade boys would fare in the fifth and sixth grade classrooms. Would the older children think them 'babies'? But one teacher reported that her fifth graders at first would chuckle when the junior curators began to speak, but that in a short time, the giggling stopped, the chairs inched closer, and the questions were cut off only by the end-of-period buzzer.

SPINOFFS

The practice of sharing and the spirit of openness can be contagious. Some classrooms in our school are separated only by a swinging door. In one instance, two teachers shared the exhibits because of their interest and because of the convenient swinging door. When another teachers asked us to share with her and one other class the plans for Japanese Children's Day, May 5, we brought in dolls, books, posters, kites, pictures, paper irises, and carp.

At lunchtime, some teachers offer their own informal evaluation of their experiences with the junior curators in descriptions of responses to the demonstrations in their classes. One third grade class, after it had seen the Masks exhibit, brought in pictures of masks, enough to make more than one poster, made masks of their own, and displayed them.

In our own class, hardly anything we do is not touched by what has been going on this year with the junior curators. The ladybug from the exhibits has appeared as a character in our Assembly program on pollution. In their ecology unit, related directly to the exhibits, the children have learned about life cycles, water problems, creature habitats, cleaning our environment and poisons on crops. There has been a lot of spontaneous play writing. Are the other class members guaranteeing themselves an audience, too?

Wilhelmina Wynn teaches at P.S. 197, Manhattan.

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Good news from abroad

In Denmark, where all children attend the "Folk School" from ages 7-17, a new science curriculum is being implemented. Until 1976, students had been divided into two groups according to ability after grade 7. Since then, all students remain in the same class, except that those in grades 7, 8, 9 and 10 may choose a number of optional subjects. Physics-chemistry, considered as one subject, is compulsory in grades 7, 8, 9 and optional in grade 10, two weekly lessons being assigned to this subject each year....

Under the "Ask Nature" project one of the aims of teaching physics and chemistry in the Folk School is that students acquire insight into scientific method and learn to formulate and solve practical problems. Therefore, an important aspect of students' laboratory work is to let the students experience how they can solve problems by doing carefully planned experiments. We want them to experience the joy of finding solutions to experimental problems on their own.

The "Ask Nature" project, which was designed and checked out from 1972 to 1976, differs from most other physics projects in its concern for the individual student. Its materials have been developed with consideration of the fact that a number of students in mixed-ability classes have difficulties in following a theoretical argument, understanding a formal definition, or even reading a textbook, and that it nevertheless is possible to get these students interested in physics and to give them an intuitive understanding of fundamental physical principles and laws. It also takes care of bright students by allowing them to penetrate the subject more deeply by doing more experiments and solving more complicated problems....

Poul Thomsen
Royal Danish School of Educational Studies

Children at work

Miriam Krasner

In my third-grade classroom, the children write, illustrate, bind, publish, and distribute their own books--in effect, they run a publishing company! The idea developed almost naturally from my emphasis on writing: a major element in the curriculum in my room is journal keeping. The children were also writing short stories, reports, and poems. Why not, I thought, put all the products of their writing activities in book form? Not only are a number of skills involved, but there is an enormous sense of accomplishment produced by a completed book.

BOOKBINDING

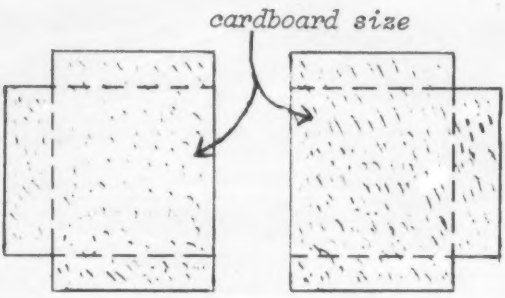
Once the contents were decided upon, the next element was the actual operation of binding a book:

In advance, gather: 1) Tape (rug tape); 2) Cardboard (art supply shop); 3) White paper (8½ x 11); 4) Scrap fabrics (denim, burlap, muslin work best); 5) Scissors; 6) Rubber cement.

Fold the white paper in half (5 to 8 pages). Sew down the center fold line using the basting stitch.

Cut cardboard slightly larger than folded paper, two cardboards per book.

Cut fabrics in this shape:



Coat the edges of cardboard with rubber cement, and the edges of the fabric. *Caution:* Go easy on the rubber cement; it will look stained if it soaks into the fabric.

Lay the cardboard onto the fabric (rubber cement side down) and press with your hand. Now coat three edges of exposed cardboard and fold fabric edges over and smooth them down.

Cement outside edges of paper, first page only. Cement borders of inside cover, leaving a ½ inch fabric border cement-free.

Lay paper onto cardboard leaving one ¼-inch seam edge extending from cardboard.

Coat edges of last page and last cover as above.

Lay the book open and face down on the table and tape the exposed seam. Allow ½ inch extra tape at top and bottom to fold over edge.

DISPLAYING THE BOOK

As the next step each child labeled the finished book with the "house" name we had decided on: Open Wing Press, Stony Brook, New York, 1977. Finally, after my explanation of how the Dewey decimal classification works, an appropriate number was applied to the spine of the book by the author. The books were then displayed in an area of the classroom designed as a center for the publishing company with space for the technology of the book production.

The cost involved for this activity is fairly low. Almost all the materials (except for the

tape) are readily available in schools or with the aid of a bit of scrounging. But most important, the publishing company serves as a means of integrating the teaching of writing, reading, and study skills.

Miriam Krasner teaches in the North Country School, Stony Brook, New York.

BUT WHY WAIT?

Detention home officials are teaching illiterate juveniles to read with more success than public schools are achieving, according to a report issued today.

Juvenile institutions in 47 states are participating in a federally financed reading project that includes such teaching techniques as the use of paperback thrillers like "Jaws," comic strips, television guides, clothes labels and transcripts of the pupils' own speech.

Project officials said the pupils are encouraged to read for fun, with no time limits and no testing. The goal, they said, is to enable nonreaders to understand want ads, road signs, job applications and food package instructions.

The project, in 148 institutions, began in February 1976 under a $210,000 grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance administration.

United Press International, March 26, 1977.

Why I want to be a teacher

Jennifer Rogow

I would like to train as an elementary teacher. I have spent a lot of time with children, and enjoy discovering new ways to help them understand the world about which they are so curious. For a long time I have wanted to work with them, but did not decide on teaching until recently as I wanted to explore different possibilities for a while before deciding on a career. As an undergraduate, I was fortunate in being able to take a wide range of courses from Anthropology and African History to Chaucer and Literary Criticism. This education gave me some understanding of the ways in which individuals and groups order their concepts of existence and structure their lives. It helped me to focus on and strengthen my own creative abilities and to organize and express thoughts.

When I began to look for something that would combine my main interests (art, dance, music, writing, animals, and the natural world), I felt that with children I had finally found my element; people with whom I could share and discover interests and whose only demands were that I be interested in theirs and them. In teaching I could use all of my experience and I would continually be gaining more. What appeals to me most about teaching is its totality. For when one *teaches* a child, one is addressing the whole of that person's being: when the child responds he is responding not only to words, but to the whole person. It is the process of communication that interests me--not only the teaching of a subject but discovering what makes that subject interesting to a child. Though

rapport is important in all communication between people, it is most important in talking with children, to whom so much depends on the way ideas are presented.

Children seem to take a great deal of their identity from what is projected onto them by the adults upon whom they depend. If these projections are negative, it may take years to undo the damage. It is the teacher's task to create the environment that will help each child to do his best. That means perceiving the problems of those who are not doing well. I emphasize the teacher's responsibility to nonachievers because I feel that children who do well may be receiving a lot of support from home. Nonachievers may be getting their support, if any, from the teacher. There are also those who are achieving under pressure from home and to whom each test is deadly serious. To them also, and the middle-range children, she must be sensitive. She must be careful not to try to "steal" the children of parents who appear indifferent, for the parents too are in a sense her responsibility. She must not alienate their children from then, but create opportunities for them to understand and enjoy their children.

When I have had some teaching experience, I may want to work with disadvantaged, maladjusted or handicapped children. As one who found school difficult as a child (I was a slow reader and I have never responded well to pressure or impersonal competitive situations), I will go to work with some firsthand knowledge of how children fail as well as what I have discovered since about how they succeed.

Jenny Rogow is a student at The Prospect School, North Bennington, Vermont.

Review

CHILDREN'S ARITHMETIC: THE LEARNING PROCESS, by Herbert Ginsburg. Van Nostrand, 1977.

Bob, a fifth grader, added 18 and 5 and got the sum 41. This was his procedure: 8 + 5 = 13. Put down the 1, carry the 3. Then 3 + 1 = 4. The answer: 41. The interviewer then asked him how many candies he would have if he already had 18 and was given 5 more. Bob immediately resorted to his fingers, counting off 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. "That's wrong!" he exclaimed, referring to his previous answer of 41.

The chapter entitled "Mistakes," from which this episode is taken, is only one of the fascinating and informative sections in this book, in which Ginsburg, a psychologist at the University of Maryland, summarizes over five years of original observations and interviews by himself and his colleagues.

The author deals with both the arithmetic that children encounter in school and the mathematical work in which they engage outside of the classroom. Even those children who fail in school mathematics can do a great deal of arithmetic in their out-of-school lives. Most children can count with competence, and many can do a great deal of practical arithmetic, before they enter school. Ginsburg assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the methods they employ and finds that their techniques are consistent, although the results may often be inconsistent.

Especially valuable to teachers and parents of preschool children are the author's suggestions on how to encourage children to learn the elements of arithmetic, in particular, "Keep in mind preschool children's tremendous accomplishments." He warns that "in some areas children need no help; in other areas it does no good; and too much of it can be destructive." He emphasizes giving support to children's counting: they enjoy it, it helps them solve arithmetic problems, and it is in this area that adults can do some good.

Among the many case studies dealing with the strategies children employ to master the written

mathematics taught in school, the poignant example of Stacy, a third-grader, stands out. At first she seemed almost retarded; she was unable to add or subtract two single-digit numbers. In subsequent interviews it became evident that she was able to add, provided she could see collections of objects representing the numbers. Finally she admitted to counting on her fingers, a practice she had previously denied. If she had been evaluated purely on the basis of standardized tests, she would have been labeled a complete failure. From such experiences Ginsburg concludes:

> Even children who fail badly seem to possess some kind of intellectual strengths that can be used as a basis for learning....I believe that if you dig deep enough you will find in virtually all children a core of arithmetic skills on which they can build.

No doubt perceptive educators and parents will already have reached many of the conclusions expressed in *CHILDREN'S ARITHMETIC*. For these people the book furnishes hard evidence to counter those who maintain that drill and standardized testing provide the solutions to children's difficulties with arithmetic.

The book is immensely readable, contains no professional jargon, and is beautifully organized. Each chapter or section of a chapter consists of case studies chosen to illustrate a specific topic, followed by a clear, brief summary and statement of principles. There are frequent references to the literature--more than 70 works are cited--as well as to studies in nonWestern cultures conducted by Ginsburg's associates and others.

CHILDREN'S ARITHMETIC: THE LEARNING PROCESS should be read by everyone who is at all concerned with mathematics or with the way children learn.

Claudia Zaslavsky

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